

Cash cuts

'Shadow' Minister talks to Spastics News

by Don Massie

THE 'Shadow' Minister for the Disabled has strongly attacked Government cuts in spending on personal social services which could lead to widespread suffering among disabled people.

'All economics on health for disabled people are counter productive,' Spastics News was told by Mr Alfred Morris, MP, who had special ministerial responsibility for disabled people until the General Election.

'I am deeply concerned about the proposed seven per cent cuts in spending on personal social services envisaged in the recent government statement on public expenditure,' Mr Morris said.

'If there are to be cut-backs on spending on prevention of disablement and on medical aids for the handicapped, then many more of those people will become hospitalised at much greater cost to public funds,' he added.

'The Government has given £4,540 million in tax cuts in a full year to the most fortunate five per cent of the population. It can hardly cry poverty therefore as an excuse for economics on disabled people.'

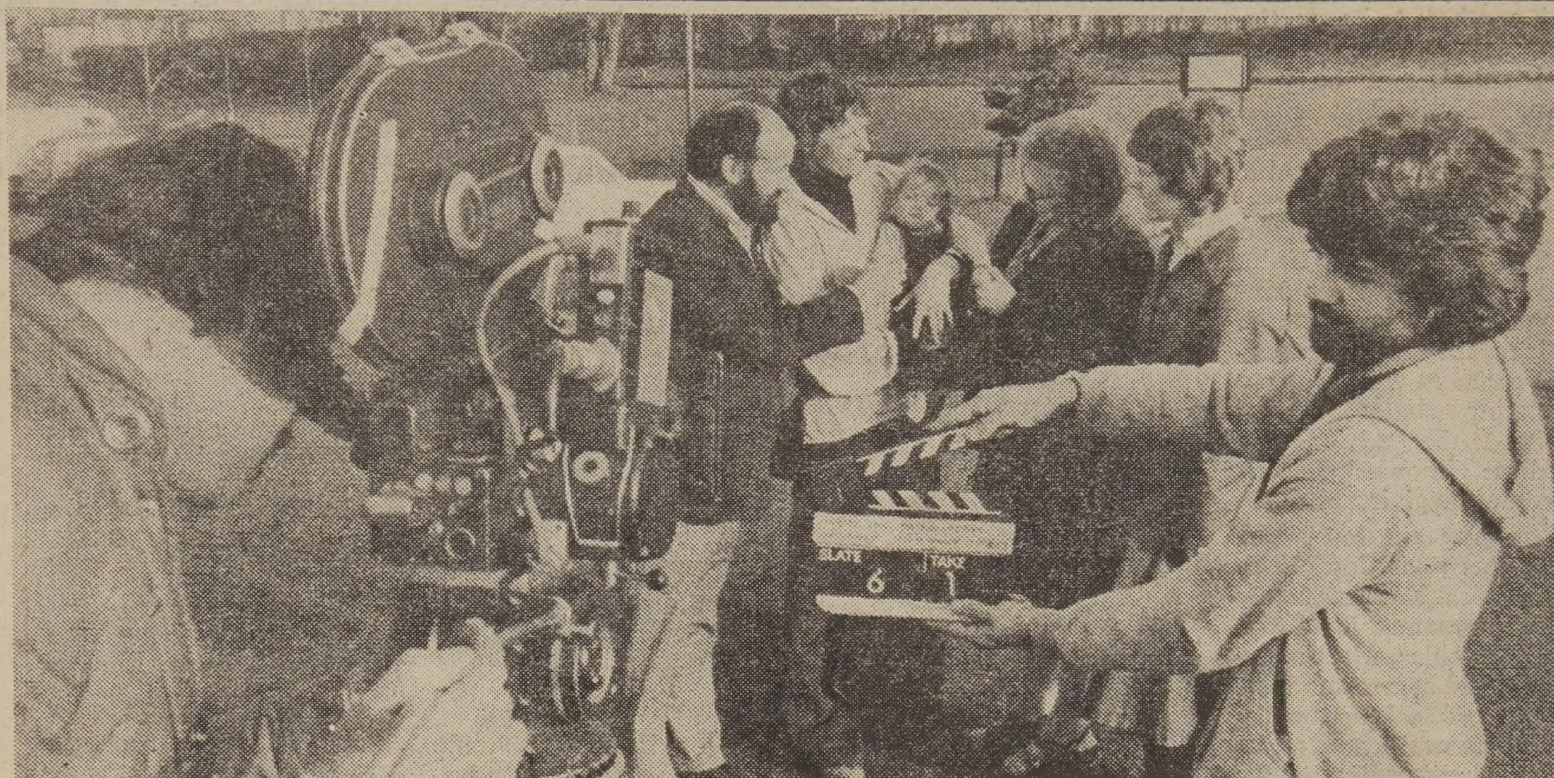
'While I was Minister for the Disabled, expenditure went up in real terms year by year. We are now faced with cutbacks that will cause very real suffering to the disabled.'

'It could lead to widespread suffering among disabled people and increase expenditure if more disabled people are put into hospital.'

'If you are not prepared to help disabled people to live in their own homes,

Continued on Page 12

TV cameras capture a story of compassion



THE scene—The Spastics Society's East Anglia Family Help Unit in Suffolk. The occasion—filming by the BBC of a very special documentary concerning adoption. The compassionate couple in the picture have been considering the possibility of adopting a spastic child, and so that they will understand some of the problems of future care they have been visiting the Society's unit to meet the young visitors there and

watch the staff at work. Mrs Margaret Cresswell, head of the unit, is introducing them to one of the children whose stay at the Family Help Unit coincided with the exciting visit of the film crew.

The Family Help Unit exists to give parents a break from the constant care of their handicapped children, to allow them a holiday together—sometimes just a night out—and it has proved a 'lifeline' at times of family crisis.

Society's message at big shows

THE Spastics Society was represented at two major exhibitions in November

where on each occasion the 'Save a Baby' stands caught the attention of VIP



speakers.

The Duke of Edinburgh, left, opened Naidex '79 at Wembley Conference Centre (report and more pictures on page 3, and new ideas and products from Naidex on 4 and 5).

The Home Secretary, Mr William Whitelaw, spoke at the 'Voluntary Organisations in to the 80's' exhibition, and visited the Society's stand, pictured below, along with Nicholas Hinton from the National Council of Social Service.

Mr Whitelaw spent some time discussing the question of the prevention of handicap and better use of the ante-natal care services with Mrs Mary Holland, Intelligence Officer for The Spastics Society. (Report and pictures on page 10.)



Sing a song of the season

WHETHER you are a soprano or bass, tone-deaf or out of tune, it does not matter when it comes to Christmas carols, and there is a feast of carol concerts in December.

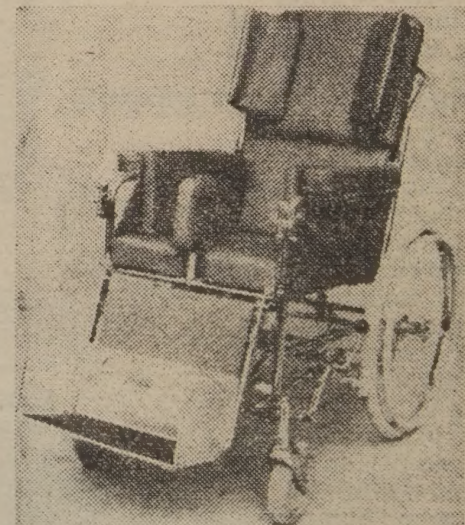
The Stars Organisation for Spastics takes the stage first with two concerts at the Royal Festival Hall on Saturday, December 15, a matinee at 4 pm and a second performance at 8 pm. Tickets are available at the Box Office and as always there will be a host of international stars to lead the well-loved traditional songs that are as much a part of Christmas as Santa.

The following day, the International Year of the Child Committee is asking everyone to assemble in front of Buckingham Palace and sing carols to the Queen, who will appear on the balcony. Carols for the Queen starts at 6 pm and promises to be spectacular, with a firework display, choirs and massed bands, and a torchlight procession. Free parking will be available for coaches in Constitution Hill and Horse Guards Parade.

Lots of pull

THE Spastics Society was one of four children's charities to benefit from the proceeds of a sponsored tractor-pull from the Somerset border to the Devon County Showground. Taking part were members of the Yacombe and District Young Farmers Club.

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Why Asian mothers-to-be depend so much on the Society's 'go between'

MANY of us realise the difficulties of communicating with some disabled people and the patience it requires to comprehend what is being said in reply to us by someone who cannot speak clearly.

But how much more difficult it is to communicate with Asian mothers, and expectant mothers who cannot speak English and cannot read or write in their own language, was explained when Mrs Lalita Patel, a field officer with The Spastics Society in the North-West region, visited The Spastics Society's HQ in Park Crescent, London.

Mrs Patel approaches the leaders of the Asian community in the North-west to ascertain the names of expectant mothers, then visits them in their homes to ensure that they go along to their nearest baby clinic for antenatal and postnatal care, and to get advice on

any personal problems.

Without Mrs Patel's care and guidance a vast region would be without anyone able to communicate in the immigrant's own languages with mothers-to-be on the needs to acquire proper advice before a baby is born. Until Mrs Patel moved in, many Asian mothers-to-be were unable to speak to health visitors, to social workers, or even to GPs because their Urdu, Hindi, or any other language, was not understood. This meant that the expectant mothers went without attending baby clinics, without the advice and medical knowledge they need before giving birth.

It also meant that babies were born of low birth weight and this frequently led to permanent handicap. Asian families, when a disabled child comes into their home, tend to keep the disability as much a secret as possible and never let the child out-of-doors, feeling embarrassed, ashamed and guilty.

Since Mrs Patel joined The Spastics Society at its Manchester office in St Andrew's House, Bridge



Mrs Lalita Patel

Street, she has contacted Asian women expecting babies, offered them all the necessary advice and guidance, and acted as interpreter with GPs, nurses, social workers and health visitors.

Mrs Patel, who lives at

Harden Drive, Bolton, talks to the mothers-to-be in the privacy of their homes (and without the presence of men) to get across the important message of acquiring medical care during pregnancy. She knows that Asian women become very embarrassed if a man starts asking questions about pregnancy, and for that reason they tend to keep very much to themselves and fail to go to a clinic for advice when a problem arises.

Asian women are often totally ignorant about how to fill in forms for the maternity grant and allowances, and often fail to acquire aids for their handicapped children, simply because they do not know how to go about it.

The need

So Mrs Patel's work is of paramount importance in helping to prevent the birth of low weight babies who are liable to become disabled for life. She finds that few women are willing to take on her task. Nevertheless, there is a distinct need for other Asian women in England to follow her example to break through the language barriers and spread the word of how to save babies.

The importance of saving babies from permanent mental and physical handicap is underlined when it is considered that the cost of keeping a handicapped person for 50 years is £250,000, compared with the cost of an entire maternity unit of £200,000.

Mrs Patel is in regular contact with nurses, GPs, social workers and anyone else who can help the Asian community, special schools in the north-west now send their problems to her and she is regularly invited to attend classes of mothers-to-be. She often interprets Punjabi or Urdu for a local obstetrician or gynaecologist who speaks only English.

Many of the Asians have left sub-tropical environments to

settle in Lancashire and are unused to the much colder winter climate; this calls for mothers-to-be to ensure they get vitamin B.

Instances dealt with by Mrs Patel include an Asian family living in Bolton who had no aids of any kind for their handicapped boys, aged 10 and eight years. The parents had no idea of how to go about acquiring help, but Mrs Patel has been successful in getting a washing machine for the mother and a wheelchair for the boys.

In a communication dilemma with an Italian GP, another mother-to-be was advised that she was overweight and had to slim by dieting. Only after Mrs Patel came on the scene was it discovered the woman was pregnant by seven months and had made no visits to a baby clinic.

Conditions

Many of the families she visits live in rooms with no indoor lavatory or proper bath. A daughter of one such Asian family was found to have TB, so the father gave up his job to be constantly at home to look after her, and never went back to work again. Mrs Patel keeps in close touch with them and hopes to help them acquire a washing machine and for the council to improve the toilet arrangements.

When a Bengali family were found to have a child that was undernourished, Mrs Patel showed the mother pictures of dishes of baby food and persuaded her that it was more suitable for the handicapped child.

One health visitor had been trying to discover how many months pregnant an expectant mother was and thought that the sign of figure two made by the woman meant that she was just two months pregnant. In point of fact the Asian woman was trying to make it clear she had only two months to go before giving birth!

His human rights for relatives

RELATIVES of handicapped people are all too often burdened with responsibilities but a bit short on basic human rights. Readers of Spastics News will be interested in these 'Ten Commandments' on the rights of relatives which Dr D. A. Spencer, Physician Superintendent of Meanwood Park Hospital, Leeds, sent to us. They provide food for thought for administrators of many a long-stay hospital...

1. The right of access to the hospital at all reasonable times to visit the resident, that is, unrestricted visiting.
2. The right to take the resident out of hospital for leave and for excursions, except when the resident's medical condition precludes this.
3. The right to information about the resident's condition and the resident's educational, occupational, recreational and rehabilitational programmes and activities.
4. The right to be informed as soon as possible about accidents, injuries, illnesses and other incidents affecting the resident.
5. The right to know how the resident spends his or her leisure time.
6. The right to information about the resident's financial state, allowances and savings, and how these are used.
7. The right to easy consultation with the professionals involved in the care of the resident.
8. The right to consultation about proposed transfer of the resident to other wards in the hospital and to facilities outside the hospital.
9. The right to be informed, and to be present, when the resident attends clinics at other hospitals.
10. The right to the guarantee that if the resident outlives other relatives and dies in hospital he or she will receive a dignified funeral.

A LITTLE INDEPENDENCE GOES A LONG WAY

Freedom means a lot to a disabled child. Malden Care offers two vehicles to bring that freedom through increased mobility - The Malden Monarch - designed for children who benefit most from a conventional sitting position and the Rally Special with a flat seat enabling the child to keep his legs out straight. Both vehicles are battery powered and driven by means of a simple joystick. Suitable for indoor and outdoor use. They are rugged and safe and can easily negotiate rough ground or kerbs of up to 3".

Designed in sporting red glass reinforced plastic these vehicles help the disabled child to get around independently and play with his or her friends. Just think what a difference that could make to a child's life!

For further details contact

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Two brothers seek a home

THERE are two spastic West Indian brothers in the care of Manchester Social Services Department, who are very much in need of the experience of family life, either together or separately. Their social worker is looking for suitable foster homes for them and enhanced fostering allowances will be paid.

Peter, aged five years, has spastic hemiplegia and is confined to a wheelchair with which he manages to get around himself. Assessed as probably being of average intelligence, his speech is limited as yet to single words and he needs help in feeding, toileting and dressing himself. Predictably, he is a very frustrated child and this shows in temper tantrums and lip-biting. He loves school and responds very readily to stimulation and training.

David, aged 2½ years, has spastic diplegia, is very severely handicapped, again in a wheelchair and is totally dependent on adults. In the classroom he is alert and responsive and an informed opinion states that his intelligence is likely to fall within the dull/normal to upper ESN (M) range. He is a pleasant, cheerful child and although he does not speak, he understands most of what is said to him.

Although these children are only in the voluntary care of the local authority, there is virtually no chance of rehabilitation.

If you feel interested in discussing the possibility of fostering either or both of these children for an agreed period of time or indefinitely, and are prepared for the travelling involved in any introductory process, please contact the Area Director of Social Services by letter, Area 4 Office, Bold Street, Alexandra Park Estate, Moss Side, Manchester M16 7AD, quoting reference CA4/AF, and giving your telephone number.

Prince Philip opens biggest ever Naidex

BIGGER and better than ever was the general verdict on the seventh Naidex held at the Wembley Conference Centre from Wednesday, November 21, to Friday, November 23. The Duke of Edinburgh, opening Naidex '79, offered his warmest congratulations to the organisers who, he said, had built up the conferences and exhibitions into the important international event that Naidex had now become.

And the international angle was clearly to be seen in the list of exhibitors which included the Export Council of Norway, whose stand was manned by a representative of the Norwegian Disabled Living Foundation, giving out information on products from seven Norwegian manufacturers, and no less than 18 US companies exhibited their products.

The Spastics Society's stand on the theme of the 'Save a Baby' campaign welcomed a steady stream of visitors throughout the exhibition, and copies of Spastics News were distributed by Mrs Renee MacNeill.

The Society was also represented in the conference section of Naidex with Miss Margaret Morgan, Controller of Personal Social Services co-chairing Seminar 1 on Friday, November 23. The subject was Social Work and Disability, organised in conjunction with the British Association of Social Workers, and the speaker was Dr Sue McMullen.

Next year's Naidex will also take place in London, at the Cunard International Hotel,

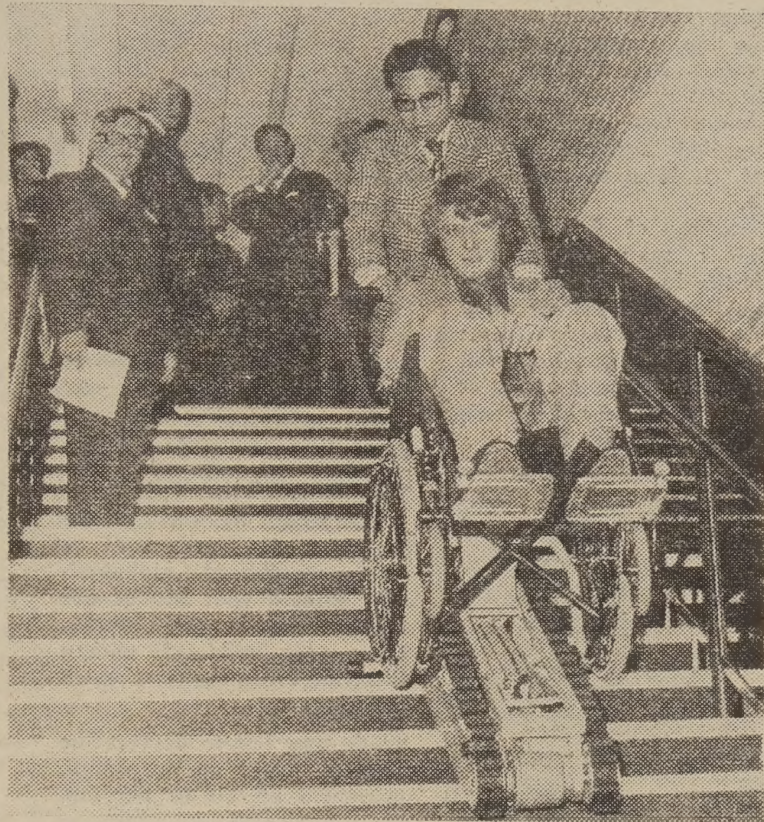
West Kensington, when the conference theme will be 'Disabled People — Positive Living or Negative Existence?'



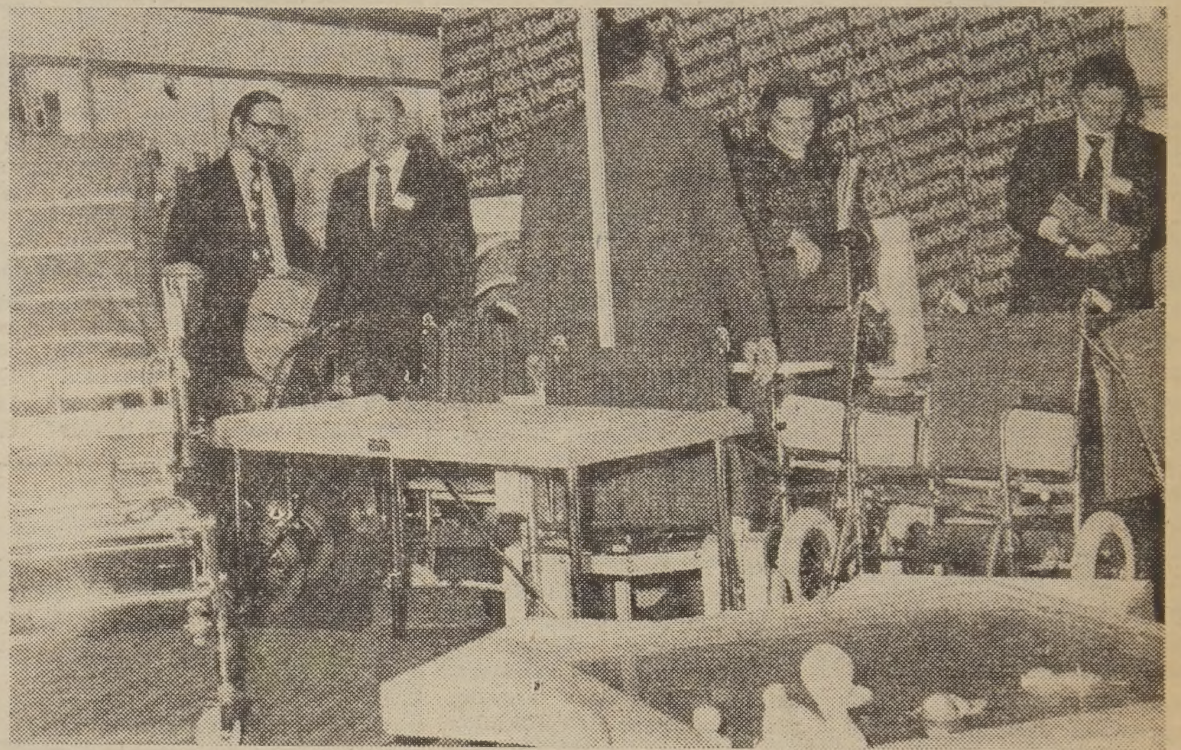
LEFT: Prince Philip, who officially opened Naidex '79 in the conference hall at Wembley before touring the exhibition, enjoys an unofficial stop, sharing a smile with Mrs Renee MacNeill, advertising representative for Spastics News.



BELOW left: Regular exhibitors at Naidex are always Newton Aids with the firm's range of manual and powered wheelchairs which Mr Lodell Henry (second on the left) is aiming to market in the United States. Far right is Mr Bob Goldthorp, the Works Manager.



VISITORS to Naidex made the most of the opportunity to try out the stair lifts installed between the two exhibition floor levels.



New ideas at Naidex . . . pages 4 and 5

Manchester hosts 'Care Before Birth' conference

HEALTH Education Officers, members of Community Health Councils and representatives from voluntary and consumer organisations, attended a 'Care Before Birth' Conference organised by The Spastics Society at the Medical School, University of Manchester, on November 24.

The Chairman was Dr Michael Moore, consultant obstetrician at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester.

Speakers were: Dr David Brooks, general practitioner, Middleton, Rochdale, on 'Care Before Birth — the Role of

the GP Obstetrician'; Professor Peter Huntingford, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, the London Hospital, on 'Care Before Birth — Safety and Satisfaction'; Mrs Cecelia Maxwell-Bradley, area nurse, child health, Manchester AHA, on 'Care Before Birth — the Importance of the Midwifery Service in Hospitals and the Community'; Mrs Alison Kelly, on 'Care Before Birth — A Mother's View'; Dr Judith Gray, specialist in Community Medicine, Planning, Prevention and Health Education, Lancashire AHA, on

'Health Education and Care Before Birth — A Redefinition'; Mrs Catherine Boyd, research officer, The Spastics Society, on 'Poverty in Pregnancy'.

There was a general discussion on future needs and policy relating to care before birth, and The Spastics Society's film 'Feeling Special', was shown.

The Spastics Society has for 18 months been running a 'Save a Baby' Campaign which aims to stop the needless death and handicapping of babies in Britain.

"Help yourself to the help you need"



COOKING

For those with hand disabilities, many gas cookers can be fitted with special handles and controls. And remember, gas cookers need no matches to light them, because they have automatic ignition.

If you are confined to a wheelchair, you may find either a cooker with a waist-level grill or a built-in cooker helpful.

For those with failing sight or blindness, special braille thermostats are available for most gas cookers, together with braille cooking charts.

GAS FIRES

Many gas fires are available with easily accessible top controls, to save bending, and most fires light automatically when turned on.

And for those people with hand disabilities, a special tap adaptor may be fitted to a number of fires.

CENTRAL HEATING

Gas central heating needs very little attention and can be set to your own particular pattern of living. Time

British Gas offers a wide range of help to those who need it most—elderly and disabled people.

If you have a disability—or have friends or relatives in need of help, here are some of the ways in which we can make life easier for you.

controls and room thermostats help to save gas and keep running costs down.

PRE-PAYMENT GAS METERS

Meters can be re-positioned at a convenient height for disabled people, and special extended handles are available.

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Go to your local gas showroom. If you cannot go, contact the Home Service Adviser of your Gas Region, who will be happy to call on you at home and provide advice free of charge. (You'll find the address and telephone number in your local telephone directory under GAS).

MORE HELP

For information about other ways in which we can help—with safety and economy hints, for example, or with a choice of ways in which you can spread the cost of your gas more evenly throughout the year—contact your local showroom.

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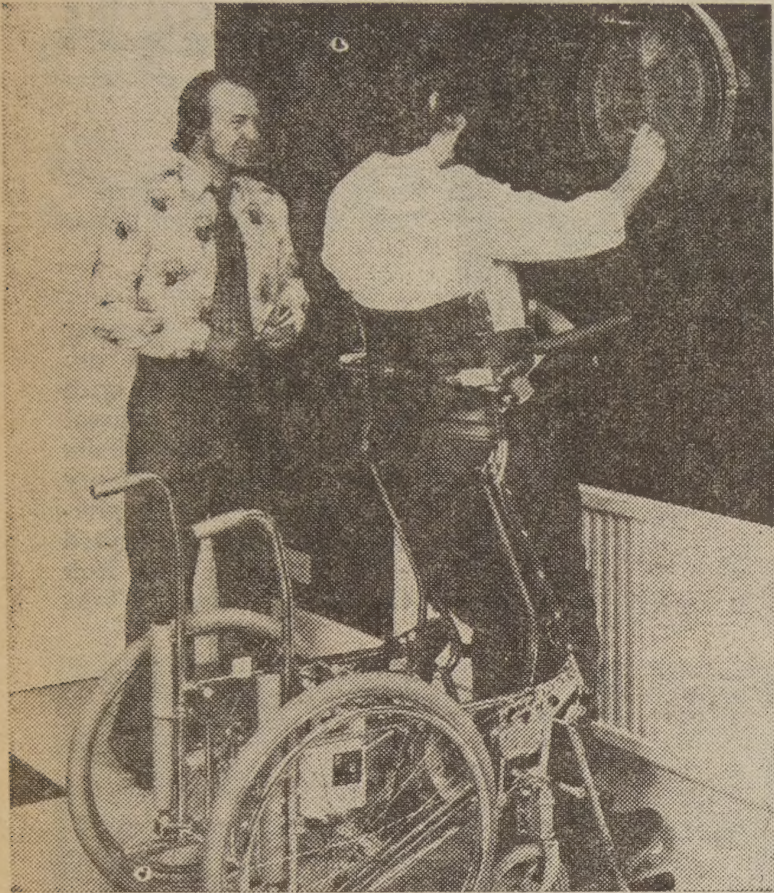
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New ideas from Naidex '79 ...



PICTURED is a revolutionary new wheelchair—believed to be the only one of its type in the world—which gives its users greater mobility, especially the ability to stand unaided. The LEVO Stand-up Wheelchair provides more freedom of movement and action because by pressing a button, the seat and back rest rise until the occupant is in a standing position. The operation can be stopped at any point on the way to the vertical. The chair's movement can also be reversed at any time.

The mechanism is powered by re-chargeable, dry batteries or by mains connection. Special non-slip rubber pads beneath the foot rests ensure the chair will not topple over

even with the most vigorous trunk movement by the user.

Costing £1,560, the LEVO Wheelchair was developed in Switzerland, and is marketed exclusively in the United Kingdom by SML Aids Limited, High Street, Barnet, Herts, EN5 5 XE.

The chair is claimed to offer several medical and practical benefits not obtainable with ordinary wheelchairs, including daily stand-up training—anytime, anywhere—without the need for outside assistance, helping to reduce pressure sores and bone de-calcification as well as helping bladder training and stimulating blood circulation. Practical benefits include relieving and reducing nursing staff and time, making objects such as books, light and other switches, window catches, lift buttons, etc. more accessible; increased independence and more active participation in such sports as darts,



OF particular appeal to the wheelchair bound and the ambulant disabled, the recently introduced Biopodeck Planter permits people to bring their hobby up to their level and overcome the frustration caused by the inability to enjoy conventional gardening.

The unit is 53in square, moulded in rot-proof glass reinforced plastic and is available with adjustable stand if required. Price approx £177.

The Biopodeck is designed to stop extreme fluctuation in soil moisture and is provided with special fast drainage to the mains via a small header

tank and contains a complete hydro system.

With sufficient natural light and some warmth this system has the best chance of growing success. Part of the secret lies in the specially formulated compost sufficient of which is supplied for the initial trayful. It is clean and light to use.

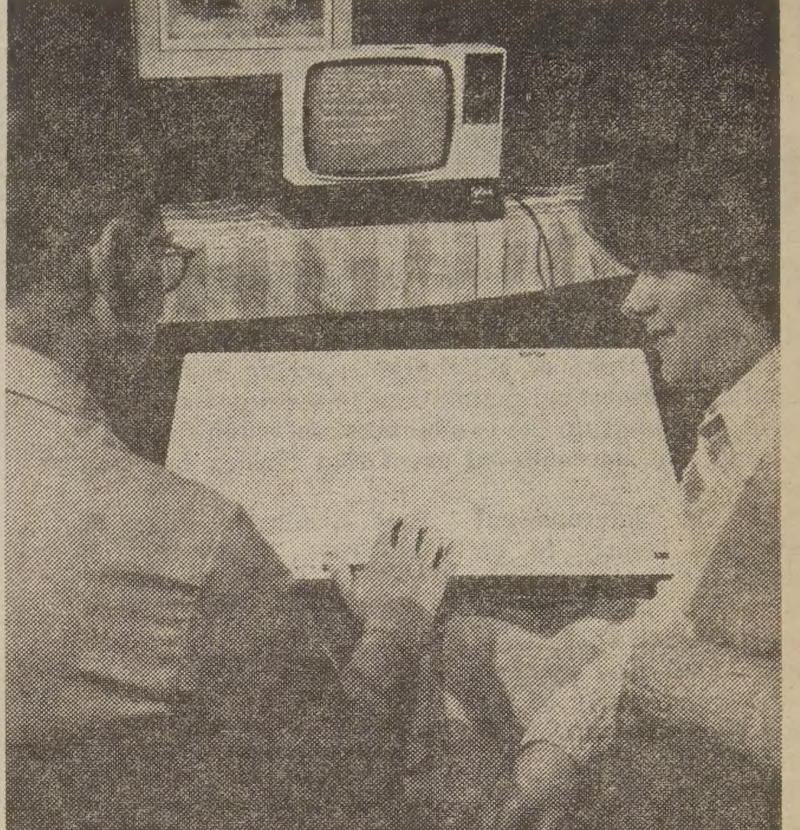
A variety of flowers and vegetables may be grown, mostly the dwarf kinds, including potatoes. A list of these and further information from: Mr Phillip Hawker, Longwell Green Reinforced Plastics Ltd, Kingsfield Lane, Longwell Green, Bristol BS15 6DN.



STANNAH Lifts of Andover exhibited its range of Stairlifts and Homelifts which enable the handicapped or elderly to retain their independence and to gain access to all floors of their home unaided. The lifts eliminate the need to move home or confine life to one floor only.

The Golden Rail Stairlift pictured runs on a rail which is contoured to meet the individual requirements of each staircase, and can follow the most complex arrangements.

The chair unit incorporates both the drive system and control unit. Additional push button controls at the top and bottom of the stairs enable the chair to be called or sent away.



COMBINING the words 'speech' and 'link,' Splink is the name of a new electronic system designed to bridge the communication gap between the speech-handicapped, the deaf—or those suffering from both disabilities—and their families and friends.

Activated by a micro-processor, it consists of a small wordboard alphabetically printed with 950 of our most commonly used words. These were judiciously chosen following an intensive research programme.

The user has to depress the required words on the board, positioned on his or her lap, and build them into sentences which immediately appear on an ordinary television screen linked to the unit by the aerial socket. The connection between the wordboard and the processor box is an invisible infra-red link which dispenses with the necessity for loose, trailing wires that could

represent a hazard. Since nearly every home has a television set, half the basic requirement is already to hand.

Invented by Dr Guy Hamilton, a Woking GP, Splink is now being commercially produced by the Queen's Award-winning firm, Medelec Ltd, which manufactures highly specialised electronic medical equipment, and is based in Old Woking, Surrey.

Initial letters on the wordboard make it possible to build any word or name desired and some of the keys short-circuit the process by automatically printing out such elementary phrases as 'I want a', 'Can you tell me?' and 'What did you say?'

The user must be literate, of course, and able to call at least one hand into play. The manufacturers hope it will be available on the National Health for, as Dr Hamilton has said: 'Since wheelchairs are provided on the NHS, the right to talk should be as fundamental as the right to walk.'

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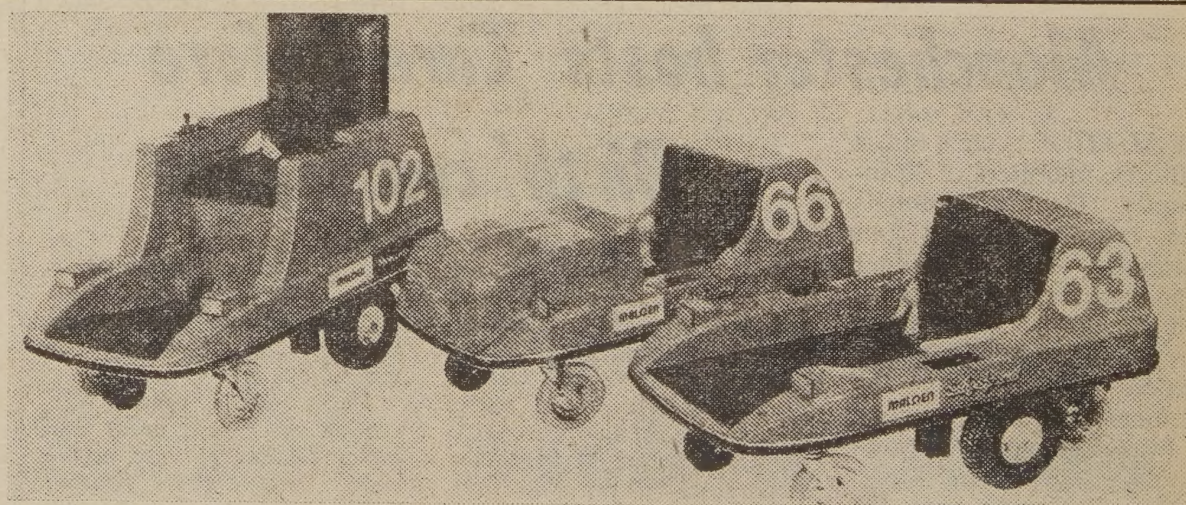
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STRONGLY featured by Malden Care at Naidex were three fun vehicles for children.

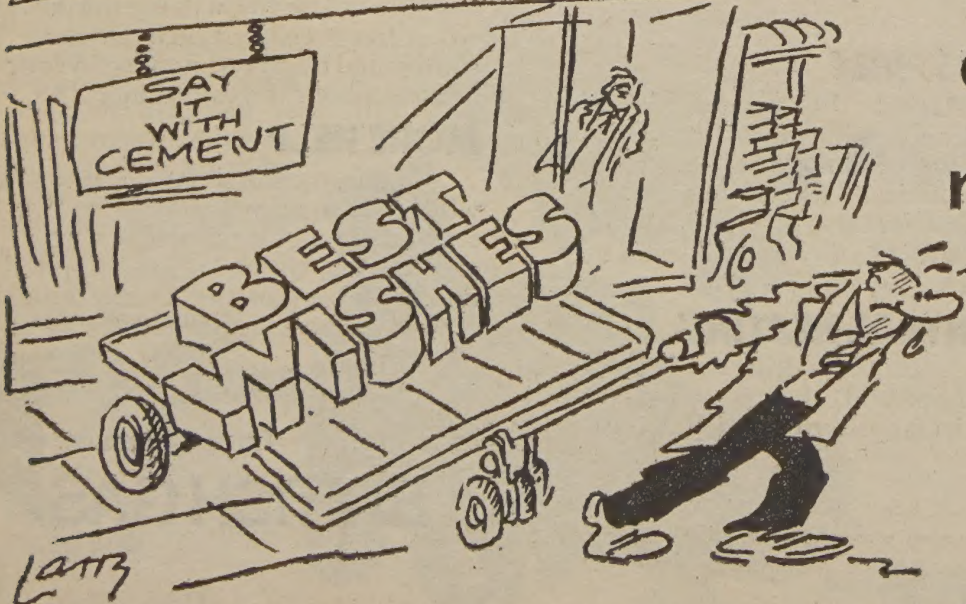
The firm has two basic go karts, the Rally Special and the Malden Monarch, the 'third' being a Rally Special with a specially designed bonnet which has the dual advantage of protecting the child's legs from bad weather, or even injury while making the vehicle look even more sporting.

The vehicles are battery-powered, joystick driven and can be used in or out of doors as they will negotiate rough ground and kerbs of up to 3in

without difficulty. The Rally Special has a flat seat and the Malden Monarch provides a suitable alternative for children who benefit most from a conventional sitting position.

Malden also exhibited a range of wheelchair controllers including a 50 amp controller with current limiting protection, as well as its joystick steering for production BL Minis and Ford Escorts, and ultrasonic controllers for 143 distributors made 256 appliances.

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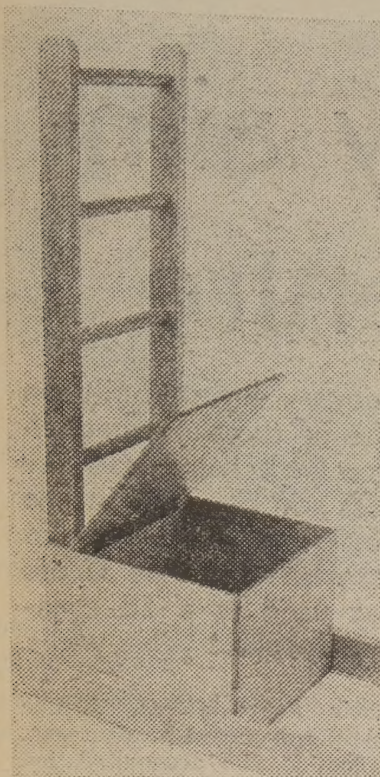
12, 29, 36, 37, 41, 45 seaters available for short or long distance travel. Both Companies welcome enquiries from Department of Education, as we specialise in this form of coach hire.

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SN Dec

...helping to make life easier



NEWTON Aids Ltd showed its range of manual and powered wheelchairs at Naidex '79, including the new Avon de luxe, the Newton Ultra-Lightweight, and the Newton Elan, plus a selection of Newton Aids' paediatric products.

New in this range is the **Ladderback Chair**, pictured above, which helps the handicapped child to achieve independent mobility. This sturdy, polished timber chair has a ski base and will not tip, so that the child may pull himself to a standing position using the rungs on the chairback as support. Storage space under the chair makes a useful toy-box, with the chair seat doubling as lid.

Further information from **Newton Aids Ltd**, Unit 4, Dolphin Industrial Estate, Salisbury SP1 2NB. Telephone 0722-20441.

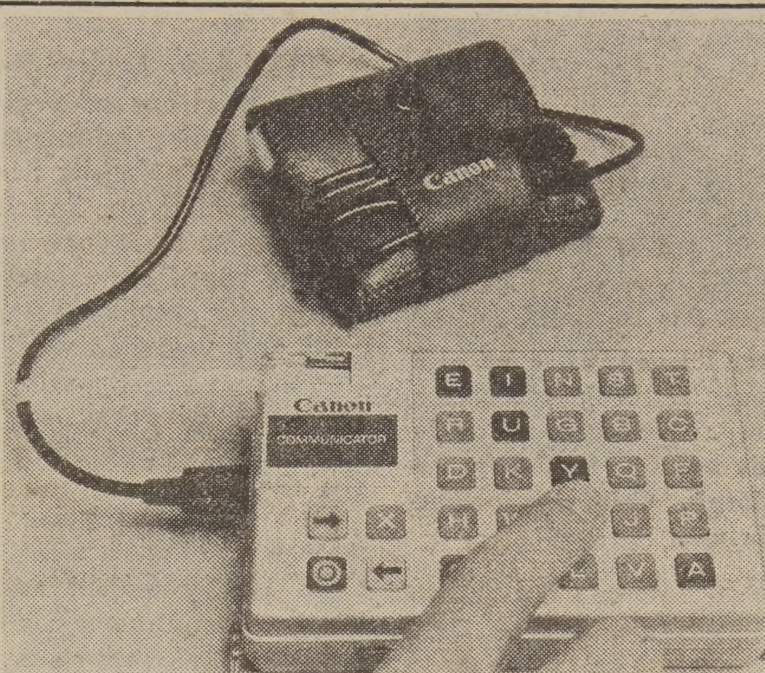
HANDICAPPED people are often reluctant to admit that circumstances could get beyond control, and yet would be glad to feel that they **COULD** summon aid instantly in the case of a bad fall, a crisis of health or perhaps when intruders are suspected.

An elegant wrist watch that doubles as a sophisticated alarm fills that need exactly. Introduced by **Emerald Electronics Limited** of Alnwick, Northumberland, it is so discreet that its emergency usage can be almost forgotten — until just that moment when reassurance or aid is urgently needed.

Something of a breakthrough in aids, the neat 17-jewel Swiss watch incorporates a tiny radio transmitter. Thanks to modern chip technology, this latest version of the **Sigtron watch/transmitter** is so streamlined that it looks no different from any other watch, except upon closest examination. Its weight is only 60g, and cost is £115.

When the aerial on the watch is raised, and the button pressed down and held, a light and an alarm are both operated on a receiver that can be placed with a warden or friendly neighbour, or in a conspicuous position in the front room window of the home.

Transmission range can be in excess of 100 metres and a special coding system eliminates broadcasting interference. The watch has a miniature battery, and the receiver, includes a self-charging battery system which can take over when mains power fails or is interrupted.



THE Canon Communicator, pictured with its battery pack, is essentially an ultra-mini electronic typewriter which has been specifically designed to be compact and light enough to be worn on the wrist by communicatively impaired adults or children.

Canon have machines on permanent loan to The Spastics Society and to Disabled Living Centres throughout the UK. A machine is also being used by the Scottish Council on Disability in its Mobile Aids Centre — a motorised caravan which serves remote parts of Scotland.

The Communicator measures 128 x 85 x 30 mm and weighs only 300 grammes. The keyboard consists of the 26 letters of the alphabet arranged in such a way that after approximately one hour's training an average speed of 83.3 characters per minute is reached. The keyboard layout is based on frequency-analysis of letters in English, German, French, Spanish and Dutch.

Messages are printed on a highly thermo-sensitive tape and maximum printing speed is 10 characters per second. The tape length is 50 metres and can hold 12,500 characters. For printing, a mechanical click-system was preferred to an electronic sensor system. When pressing a key one gets a triple 'feed back': acoustic, visual and sensoric.

Face-to-face communication is possible by means of a

'turnlock' system. The machine with paper output (message) can be turned 180 degrees towards the receiver. The turnlock system is made in such a way that the Communicator is safely fixed on the leg or on the waist, and means of fixing it to the arm of a wheelchair or hung from the neck with a neckstrap are also available.

The Communicator was developed by Canon in the Netherlands in conjunction with two Dutch psychologists, Dr J. M. A. van Mierlo and Dr A. van Uden, who suggested that Canon adapt their hand-held calculator and develop a mini-typewriter for the handicapped in the fields of speech and hearing.

Sales of the Canon Communicator are being handled on a non-profit making basis, and are only made direct to avoid any increase in cost to the user.

The cost of the complete Canon Communicator set is £257 plus VAT. Additional tapes are available in packs of 20 at a cost of £9 per pack.

Qualified demonstrators are now available on request and further information on the Canon Communicator can be obtained from Alan Berg or Mrs D. Hopkins of Canon Business Machines (UK) Ltd, at Sunley House, Bedford Park, Croydon, CR0 0XF. Tel 01-680 1966.

Detailed medical information regarding the application of the Canon Communicator can be obtained from Dr J. M. A. van Mierlo, Huize 'Zonhove,' Nieuwstraat 70, Son (NB) Holland.



PICTURE shows the Canon Communicator and the two alternative keyboard covers supplied with the set. Top right is a thin keyboard cover for motorial handicapped people and is used to prevent a double entry which could be induced, for example, by a trembling hand. The thick keyboard cover on the left is used by motorial handicapped people without any hand-function (pressing by means of a pencil or stick in the mouth or mounted on the forehead).



PIONEERS of the lightweight folding pushchair, **Andrews Maclaren** showed its restyled standard **Baby Buggy** and the reclining **Lie-Back Buggy**, as well as the **Buggy Major** which was especially developed for

the older handicapped child. The 'Major' — based on the same folding system as all Maclaren pushchairs — weighs only 5.4 kg, can carry up to ten times its own weight, and is easy to store and transport.



SIX-year-old Susan Wesencroft proudly displays her new **BEC special wheelchair** which has enabled her to get out and about by herself for the first time. The chair was specially built to fit around the seat insert in which Susan spends her day.

FEATURED on the **BEC** stand at Naidex was a selection from the company's special wheelchairs which have been built to suit individual needs. As manufacturers of a comprehensive range of electric portable wheelchairs used by people of all ages and with all kinds of disabilities, **Biddle Engineering Company Ltd**, says it has long been aware of the need to offer as many variations in its standard range as possible.

But the variations of the human frame are infinite, and so about 18 months ago the firm set up a department for developing and building custom-made wheelchairs, initially for children who previously had no means of getting out and about by themselves. This entailed building chairs exactly to the child's measurements, often to fit special seat inserts. Control

systems often had to be altered, too, as in the case of the little girl for whom the conventional push control was turned round so that she could use the limited movement she had in her arms to pull on the control lever.

To date, **BEC** has produced over 100 special wheelchairs for both adults and children. Each case is assessed by an experienced engineer who discusses with the individual his or her requirements and investigates their capabilities.

Displayed alongside the 'specials' were some of the company's range of standard wheelchairs, including the **Semi-Recliner**, the **Chin-Control**, and the **Ranger Mark I**.

Further details from **Biddle Engineering Co, Ltd**, 103 Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3UB. Tel 021-550 7326.

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SN Dec

The 'good life' at Kyre Park

Self-sufficiency aim at Society centre

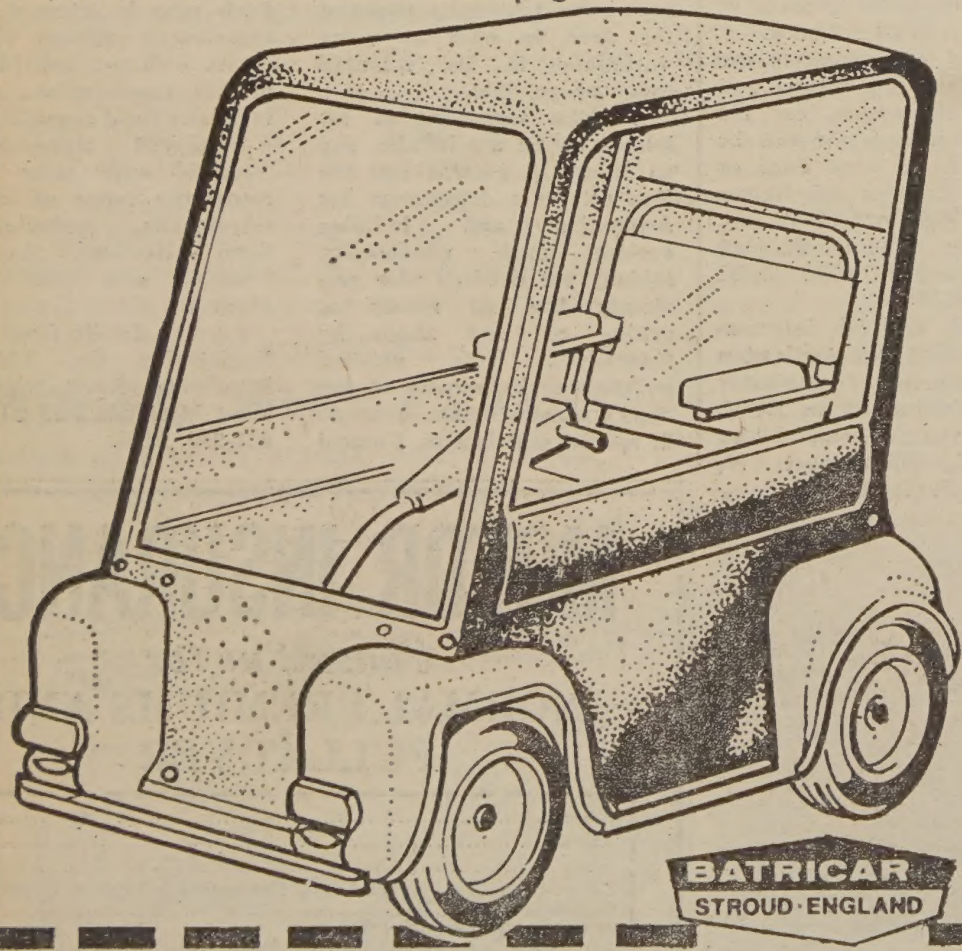


JOHN Stronnells (left) is one of two residents to share a keen interest in helping with the animals. Here he lends a hand to Gerald Mole, the gardener, as they round up the reason for Kyre Park's leap into the world of self sufficiency. The 40 ewes are in lamb, guaranteeing dinners for the year to come. Below: Colin and Carole Hedley, the centre's warden and housekeeper, with an old-fashioned plough. Colin says it could really come from a museum but is still in use.



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SN Dec

A GREY lady haunts the cellar of a magnificent country house built on the foundations of a castle, and surrounded by some of the most beautiful of English countryside in Worcestershire. Kyre Park has stood for 1,000 years, a family home until the death of the last son and heir in the First World War. Speculators stripped it, a Governor-General of Australia made it his residence until the Second World War, when the Red Cross used it for a convalescent home, after which it was used as a TB sanatorium for children. And then it stood empty for five desolate years while time and weather worked their worst.

When The Spastics Society bought it in the early 1960's its grandeur was gone, the ballroom's spectacular proportions irrevocably lost, and only the Grey Lady still in residence.

Kyre Park was going through a bad patch when Colin Hedley arrived as Warden from Drummonds—the Society's showplace of a residential centre where everything is purpose-built, immaculately kept, gleaming, and where he had been Deputy Warden.

In four years he has revitalised the place in an astonishing fashion—lucky chance, forward planning and hard, unrelenting slog have been responsible for what could almost be described as an economic miracle. The mansion, with its 19 bedrooms, boasts five lakes in its 32 acres, and Colin's first move was to tidy the place up. Dense areas of undergrowth were cleared with a two-fold benefit. Now picnic areas exist in the woodland where residents can simply go and get away from it all. Equally important land was available for use and it is the use of that land that has led to Kyre Park becoming self-sufficient.

The sheep

'It all started because having cleared the land we needed to keep it that way. We could have used men and machines—but that is expensive so I had another idea—what about sheep,' Colin remembered. He picked up 15 old ewes at £15 each and the economic miracle had begun—although no one knew it then.

He now has a flock of 60—all worth nearly £40; they keep the grass down and the residents in meat throughout the year, for some of the ewes were in lamb. 'It was a bit sad at first,' Colin's wife Carole recalled, 'watching the lambs playing round about the house and knowing they would be on the dinner table next week—but we soon got over that.'

The sheep were followed by chickens, good layers who, when their days of production are over, follow the lambs into the freezer. So productive has Kyre Park become that it has had to invest in three large freezers. In addition to meat there is the harvest of nearly three acres of vegetables. Potatoes and sprouts, carrots

and peas, apples and pears, plums, damsons, even hazelnuts, all fill the store house to overflowing.

'Of course we do get a bit tired of eating lamb, but then we can always have chicken for a change,' said Colin as he eyed the next item for the menu—four geese innocent of their fate swimming on the largest of the ornamental lakes. Next year one of the lakes will be stocked with rainbow trout.

'It is all a question of good housekeeping,' said Colin. 'We made a few mistakes at first—such as producing an excess of some crops—but now we have exactly the right balance with nothing going to waste. Because one of my staff has a private butcher's licence we don't even have to go outside for that, we can kill and dress stuff ourselves—and the sheep fleece fetches £2 a coat, so you can see we make the most of everything.'

Saving

Every way of pruning expense was investigated and utilised. Four new garages and a tarmac road leading up to them were needed—a local firm quoted something in the region of £15,000. So handyman John Newman set to and did the job for £1,500. A 600 gallon diesel storage tank cuts the cost of fuel by between seven and eight pence a gallon which, with Kyre Park's transport needs, is a very real saving.

Worcester is the nearest station some three-quarters of an hour's drive away, so staff drive in to fetch them because there is no bus. And so that relatives can make the most of a trip, there is a guest cottage at their disposal in the grounds so that they can stay the night.

Colin and Carole live in a bungalow near the house with

their two children, Joanne eight and Simon nearly seven. There is also accommodation for living-in staff. Colin was a psychiatric nurse and Carole a social worker and both come from the North-East. The estate also possesses a superb tithe barn, built in the 15th century at a cost of £47 10s, where tenants paid their tithes each Christmas. That, too, is now a money-spinner, let out for functions, its interior marrying ancient beams with a well-stocked bar and exits to comply with fire regulations, while the outside looks much the same today as it did when first built.

And today Kyre Park flourishes, enjoying a good relationship with the local people, its workshop successfully competing for local contracts while the younger more energetic residents have the choice of helping with the sheep and learning about the land.

Its isolation means that residents with behavioural problems can be assimilated without conflict in a way perhaps impossible in a centre surrounded by neighbours. The newly-garaged transport fleet with its cheaper fuel means, however, that staff and residents need not feel isolated since they have access to the major towns like Worcester, Hereford, Leominster, Malvern and Birmingham.

Colin admits, however, to one minor grumble. In addition to all its other assets, Kyre Park has a wealth of pheasant, so much so that some land is leased off to a shoot. Since coming to Kyre Park, Colin himself has discovered an aptitude for shooting—pheasant after all is an alternative to lamb. 'It's alright until it comes to the Wardens' Conference at the Society's headquarters. You'd never believe the amount of ribbing I have to put up with. 'Ah, here comes the Lord of the Manor' they say as I walk in.'

And no doubt the Grey Lady permits herself a quiet chuckle from time to time.

LIZ COOK.



EWART Morgan is the centre's workshop supervisor and here he watches brother and sister David and Pat Croucher as they work at packing stainless steel utensils for a local contractor.



MRS Edna Cook's name matches her role at Kyre Park where an abundance of good food — no artificial colouring or preservatives used — is on hand. She stands at one of the new freezers with part of this summer's harvest.



ABOVE: Over the years every side of the magnificent mansion has been used as the main entrance and Mrs Sally Harris stands with Ian Hackett at today's front door. She is the longest serving member of staff — senior house-mother, she came to the centre 15 years ago when it opened.



LEFT: The centre also has an extended education programme for residents and here Val Watson, workshop instructor, demonstrates the use of cosmetics, using Jean Woodford as a model, while Dick James, Hilary Pickering and Helen Banas look on.

The Director's Christmas appeal

THIS Christmas appeal letter from Mr James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society, will be appearing this month in newspapers and magazines all over the country:

CHRISTMAS is a time for compassion and for giving. May I appeal to your readers to help The Spastics Society in its important work, either by buying our Christmas cards and gifts or by sending a donation to our annual appeal.

The Society is fighting hard on two fronts. Its 'Save a Baby' Campaign aims to prevent the terrible toll of needless death and handicap among Britain's babies and has the important objective of raising money for more research. At the same time the

Society is caring for thousands of severely handicapped men, women and children who are given care, treatment, training and education in our schools and centres all over the country.

The cost of research and of caring is very high and as inflation continues to bite deeply into our resources, the generosity of the public is increasingly vital to us if we are to survive. Every contribution, however small, will be most gratefully received at 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Spell in 'Parliament' for Delarue students

TWO sixth-formers from The Spastics Society's Thomas Delarue School in Kent had the chance to be teenage MPs for two days as members of a Young People's Parliament, convened by the British Youth Council and the International Year of the Child UK Committee. Two hundred young people met at County Hall, London, in order to debate and discuss amendments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

The Young People's

Parliament was opened by Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher.

RESULTS from House to House collections for The Spastics Society, held during September to October:

Havering, £928.25; Farnham, Surrey, £1,124.63; Sevenoaks, £3,353.70; West Malling, £1,012.38; Tonbridge, 1,282.07; Redhill / Reigate, £1,677.69; Bridgewater and District, £653.29; Salop, £2,700.95; Birmingham, £2,953.95; Gosport, £1,687.98; Waterlooville, £1,914.18.

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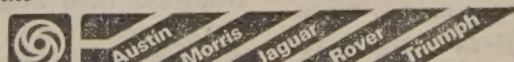
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Could you bring love and laughter to hospital children?

PLAYLEADERS are desperately needed to bring love, a little laughter and warmth into the sad existences of 3,900 severely mentally and physically handicapped children whose only home is bounded by the four walls of a ward in a subnormality hospital.

The acute shortage of staff and inadequate facilities in many of the 64 subnormality hospitals throughout Britain means it is often impossible for hard-pressed nurses and hospital officials to give these lonely, lost children

the mother love and stimulation they need so badly, much as they would like to.

Joint sponsors of the scheme to start weekend play groups — the time when the children are most in need — are The Spastics Society, the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, the Save the Children Fund and the National Playing Fields Association, working together as a mutual contribution to the International Year of the Child.

The project is to be launched shortly at Darenth Park Hospital, Dartford, Kent and at

Pewsey Hospital, Near Marlborough, Wiltshire.

Men and women with a genuine concern for mentally and physically handicapped children, who would be interested in working as a group leader should watch their local papers for advertisements if there is a subnormality hospital in the area. Salary for a total of 10 hours work on Saturday and Sunday will be around £1,250 per annum. No special qualifications are needed, but a flair for organisation and the ability to liaise successfully with hospital staff, are both essential. Duties will

include the organising of play time, outings, special events, the purchase of playthings, as well as encouraging local volunteers and parents to come and help with the work. The aim of playgroup leaders should be to fill a much needed gap, but not to try to take over the work of professionally trained staff.

Miss Maureen Oswin, who made a detailed study of the plight of children living in long stay hospitals found that, given adequate mothering and play opportunities, a child could be helped to find a happy, confident place in his

environment despite being separated from his family.

In four of the hospitals she visited many of the children spent hours lying on bean bags, or sitting in wheelchairs or small armchairs, and they were only moved or touched when they needed some routine physical care. One day, during a school holiday, an incontinent 11-year-old girl called Florence who was non-ambulant and speechless, spent from 9.50 am to 6.30 pm sitting in her wheelchair. She was only lifted out once to have her nappy changed. Thus she spent eight hours and 35 minutes

sitting alone. She had no toys and only received attention when she was being fed and changed. This was a typical day for Florence and for many of the other children.

The four sponsoring organisations believe that the setting up of play groups could help to offset the terrible damage done by this lack of stimulation, but they also consider that playgroups are only short-term solution to the problem of children living in long stay hospitals. The ultimate solution must be to bring them into the community, living in small, homelike hostels, where they can be cared for by a few people and be able to relate to them in love and dependence.

Meantime, playgroup leaders are urgently needed.

News about the Spastics Pool

MR and Mrs Reynolds have 12,500 good reasons for looking so happy—and they are all £'s. Mr Geoffrey Arter, a Director of Top Ten Promotions, presented the first dividend cheque for £12,500 to the happy couple of Blacon, Chester, who intend taking their family on a holiday to Jersey.



EXPLORER Chris Bonnington takes delivery of a new mini-bus on behalf of the Annan and District Branch of the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped. The mini-bus was presented by Geoffrey Arter, a Trustee of the Good Neighbours Trust and a Director of Top Ten Promotions.

The Society has had to rely in the past on public transport for outings, visits to swimming pools, transporting the handicapped from their homes to the centre in Annan, and for visits by parents to a hospital at Larbert.

The mini-bus was donated by Top Ten Promotions Ltd, from money raised through the 'Spot-the-Ball' competitions. Picture shows: Chris Bonnington, right, receiving the keys of the new mini-bus from Geoffrey Arter, watched by the chairman of the Annan Society, Elizabeth Collett.



MR Nefyn Davies of St Asaph, Clwyd, certainly did not mind taking a break from his work to receive a £3,571 first dividend cheque from his works manager, Mr H. Goodwill (centre). The presentation took place in the grounds of Chance Pilkington, Clwyd, where Nefyn is employed on production. Looking on was official collector Mrs S. Jones, who automatically received a bonus cheque for £178.57.



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A HAPPY gathering at the Northern Ireland soccer team's headquarters, when representatives of the Spastics Pool went along to congratulate Roy Ferguson, of Belfast, Northern

Ireland, on receiving a £5,000 'Starball' cheque from the then manager of the soccer team, Danny Blanchflower (third right).

Pictured from left, Mrs Dorian, a member of the Pool; Mrs Latchford, col-

lector's wife; Linda Ferguson, winner's wife; Chris Robson, supervisor; and Percy Latchford, collector.

Roy and Linda, who have a six-month-old baby boy, intend investing the money for the future.

Will VIP's report bring more jobs for disabled?

Over 1,000 copies of a report entitled 'Opportunities for Disabled People in the City' are being distributed to firms in the City of London in a drive to create awareness amongst employers of the problems faced by handicapped people.

The publication is the report of a working party set up last May by the Chairmen's Committee, headed by Lord Armstrong, chairman of Midland Bank. Other members include chairmen of such organisations as British Petroleum, Central Electricity Generating Board, IBM, Unilever, the Stock Exchange and the Bank of

England.

The report, presented to the Lord Mayor, Sir Kenneth Cork, at the Mansion House, has as its main recommendation the setting up of a central registry and employment office for the disabled. This proposed registry would be a privately run employment office acting as a link between employers, Disabled Persons Associations and Disabled Resettlement Officers. Initially support would have to come from employers by way of loan of office premises plus secondment of staff.

The central registry would publicise the opportunities open to disabled people plus the assistance available to them and to their employers.

Dramatherapy ...

A NEW course providing Dramatherapy training on a full-time basis is offered for

Music ...

A WEEKEND course on therapy in music for handicapped children is to be held at Southlands College, Wimbledon Parkside, London, SW19, on January 26 and 27, 1980. The course is organised by the Nordoff/Robbins Music Therapy Centre. Details from: The Secretary, 6 Queensdale Walk, London, W11 5QQ.

the first time in Britain at Salford College of Technology. The course combines practical and experiential work with academic study of Dramatherapy and psychodynamic theory. Group-analysis training is an important aspect of the work and course participants will be expected to draw on personal experience when involved in group and psycho-drama activities.

The course starts in January, 1980. Information from Head of Dept. Department of Humanities, Salford College of Technology, Frederick Road, Salford, M6 6PU. Tel 061-736 6541, extension 296.

Dancing .

WHEELCHAIR dancing: Do you enjoy dancing? If you would like to join in this activity and are resident on the Isle of Wight, please contact me. It's great fun and an opportunity to make new friends. All age groups and electric chair users are welcome. Write to: Mrs Jean Rulton, c/o 4 Bedford Court, Bedford Row, Carrisbrooke Road, Newport, Isle of Wight.



JERSEY Spastics Society was determined to make a big thing of their silver jubilee mammoth fund-raising effort and promised Mr Tony Frank, the Society's Assistant Director, Regions, a large cheque towards the 'Save a Baby' campaign. Our picture shows that they were true to their word in every way. Mrs Shirley Jennings, the local society chairman made the presentation of a super-sized cheque for £15,000 at their annual dinner and dance.

And Mr Frank received the out-sized token of their huge generosity with a wide smile. It was no little achievement for the small Channel Island Society to raise such a magnificent sum towards the £2 million, the Campaign needs to improve research into the cause of handicap.

And since it is important to keep the bank manager happy a smaller genuine cheque for £15,000 drawn on a real bank was safely in Mr Frank's pocket.

Picture by Jersey Evening Post

Royal visitors at SOS Silver Jubilee Ball



—and stars thanked at AGM

THE Silver Jubilee Ball celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Stars Organisation for Spastics was a radiantly royal occasion as readers can see from the above picture.

Princess Michael of Kent is being presented with a bouquet by Mrs Lesley Parker, a resident of Good Neighbours House, while Prince Michael and The Lady Anne Tennant, President of SOS, looks on.

Another important event in the SOS diary was the annual general meeting on November 20 when Dame Vera Lynn was

elected chairman of Colwall Court and Adrian Love chairman of Good Neighbours House. Leslie Crowther was elected SOS vice-chairman and Michael Grade, the hon treasurer.

Mr W. A. Burn, hon treasurer of The Spastics Society commented in his vote of thanks to the SOS members that it was the sincere interest in the residents and guests which was so vital to the success of the units and the happy atmosphere inside of them. He also thanked the SOS members for their work in support of the Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign.

Publicity saves group's caravan

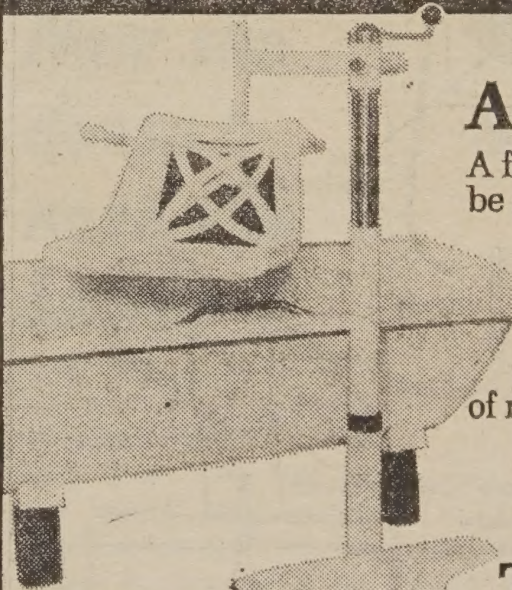
ST ALBANS Spastics Society can keep its holiday caravan after all, because the new owner of the site at Kessingland, Great Yarmouth, is the Caravan Club.

The caravan, used throughout the year to provide holidays for families, came under threat last month when the new unknown owners bought the site and gave everyone a month's notice to quit. Thanks to the local paper, the Herts Advertiser, which publicised the plight of the St Albans group, the Caravan Club, which was unaware of the circumstances immediately relented.

'We wanted vacant possession of the site so we could use it as a touring base for our members, but we decided to make an exception of the charity when we heard of their plight. We're not in the business of putting good causes out on the street so we've told them they can stay,' said a spokesman for the Caravan Club.

'It was marvellous news,' said Mrs Prettyman, the Society's joint secretary.

Two practical aids for greater independence in the bathroom



Autolift Bathing Aid

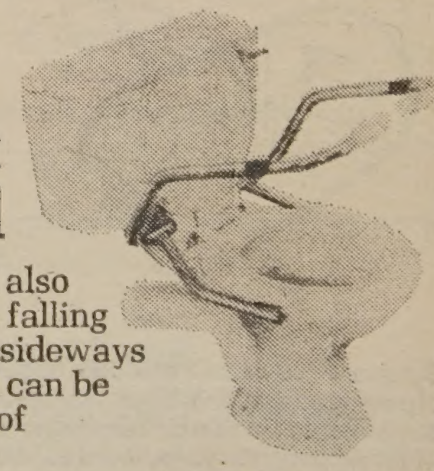
A floor mounted bathing aid which can be self or assistant operated.

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Motability cuts driving costs for disabled

MOTABILITY is cutting overall motoring costs by almost a quarter for disabled people, according to the latest figures produced jointly by the Automobile Association and Motability.

Since its inception in July of 1978, Motability—the government-backed charity set up to advise on the use of mobility allowances—has already provided nearly 5,000 cars, many specially adapted, for use by disabled people.

The total value of vehicles already applied for—nearly 9,000—is approaching the £25 million mark.

Disabled people with a mobility allowance, whether motorists themselves or through a nominated driver, can obtain a discount of up to 15 per cent on the price of a new vehicle or take advantage of a special lower cost leasing scheme.

By leasing through Motability, disabled people can cut car running costs by 21 per cent for a car of 1000cc or under.

The costs have been calculated by the AA at current Motability leasing scheme rates over a three to four year period and include servicing, repair and parts costs together

with a protection against rises in the rate of interest.

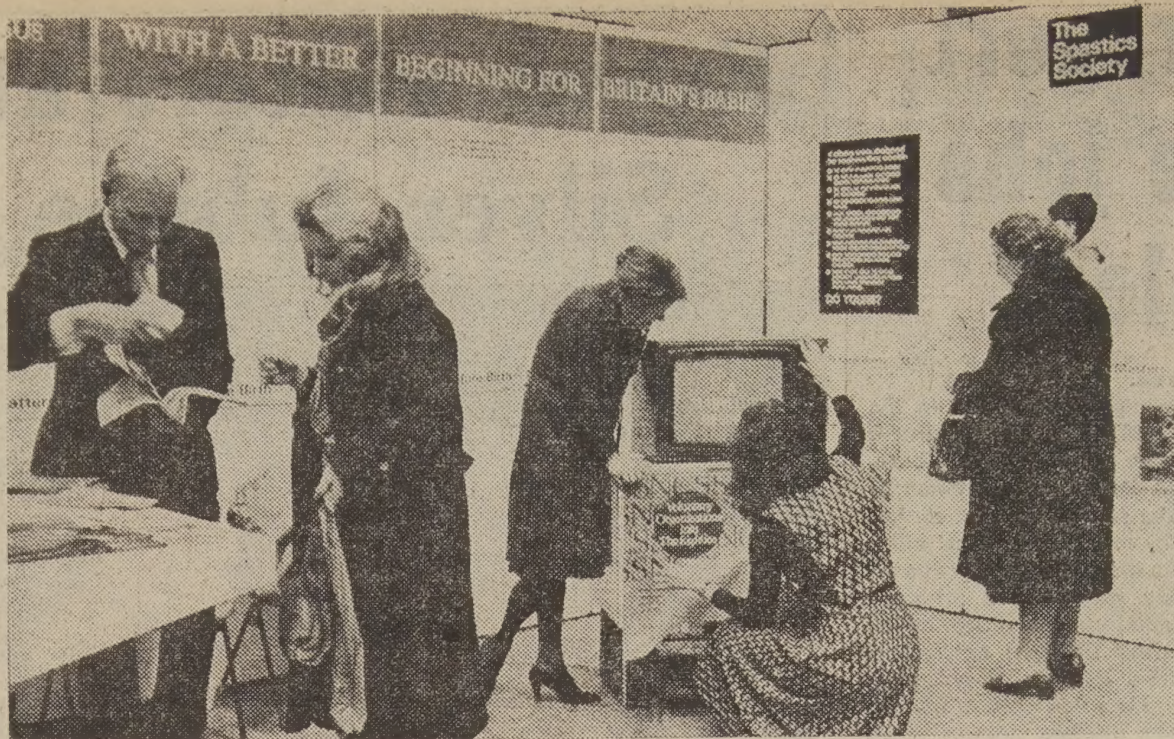
Cars supplied through Motability are predominantly British—Minis and modified Ford Escorts have proved to be among the most popular.

Commenting on the success of the scheme, an AA spokesman said: 'The enthusiastic response to this use of the mobility allowance through Motability clearly underlines the tremendous value of the private motor vehicle when coping with the personal needs of disabled people.'

'Motability clearly offers disabled motorists mobility at considerably reduced cost without the basic worries of servicing, repairs and rising rates of interest.'

Why not...

WENDY Day will be 18 on January 17 and would love to have a pen-friend. Because of her spasticity she cannot get about much but very much enjoys swimming, reading and show-jumping. Please write to her at 45 Harp Field Road, Trent Vale, S.O.T. Staffs ST4 5QT.



FINISHING touches to the setting up of The Spastics Society's stand are undertaken by Mr Henry Gamper, Head of Advertising, while Intelligence Officer Mary Holland and Trisha Hamilton, Prevention Campaign Co-ordinator, tune the television ready to relay the 'Care before Birth' video message.

Queen finds volunteers ready for the 1980's

THE National Council of Social Service celebrated its 60th anniversary on Tuesday, November 20, by holding a one-day exhibition entitled Voluntary Organisations into the Eighties.

Opened by Her Majesty the Queen, the exhibition in the Royal Horticultural Society Old Hall in Westminster, attracted large

crowds including many people in wheelchairs, who took full advantage of the opportunity to find out more about new organisations as well as updating their existing knowledge of the more traditional charities.

A total of 45 voluntary organisations had publicity stands at the NCSS exhibition, the theme of The Spastics Society's being the 'Save a Baby' campaign.

The 'Save a Baby' stand quickly caught the interest and attention of the Home Secretary, Mr William Whitelaw, who spent some time at the Society's stand discussing the prevention of handicap and the need for Care Before Birth with Mrs Mary Holland, Intelligence Officer.

'Mr Whitelaw particularly asked what action we thought was required,' said Mary Holland, who told him that what was needed was a change in attitudes, and more planning with foresight in order to provide a service to meet the needs of people.

Later in the afternoon, delivering his first speech to an audience of voluntary or-

ganisations, Mr Whitelaw began by saying that as Minister responsible for the overall co-ordination of government policy towards the voluntary sector, he welcomed the opportunity to say something about the government's approach.

'I know that, in this gathering, I am preaching to the converted. But I would add this. We, in government, will continue by our overall policies, to create increasing opportunities for individual personal initiative. But we must look to you, who are already committed in the voluntary sector, to help us in spreading an appreciation of the values of which I have spoken, and to provide the stimulus which will bring others into the voluntary field.'

'In contemplating the future in this way, I take great heart from the fact that at the present time, so great a part of the country's voluntary effort continues to be funded very largely from voluntary sources.'

Mr Whitelaw said that while voluntary money will continue to provide the major income for the voluntary sector, government grants, whether at central or local level, would continue to play an important part in the support of voluntary organisations. He added that the major contribution made by the voluntary sector means that 'we must continue to develop appropriate means of consultation at all levels in the development of policy and planning the delivery of services.'

LETTERS

Joey's fan

I HAD to write and tell you how I enjoyed the items about Joey Deacon and his friends in the recent issues of Spastics News. I hope they will be very happy in their new house, and will enjoy the homely atmosphere which they have missed for so long. I have read Joey's book, which must have taken such a lot of time and patience to write, and after reading about Joey and his pals in your paper, I saw them all on TV, and that was wonderful.

Let's hope they live happily in their new home until the end of their days, but it must be a big step for them after being in hospital for most of their lives.

Miss E. Agar,
Madison Avenue,
Hodge Hill,
Birmingham.

Your stories

I AM currently writing a book about the place of disabled people in this society and would be greatly helped by personal accounts of the experience of disability. I want to find out what makes it hard to live with disability and what attitudes disabled people encounter in their work and social life. I also want to find out what helps to make disability less restricting, what disabled people feel about the opportunities and services now on offer and what improvements they would like to see in these.

I should be most grateful if readers could either send me their own personal accounts, or pass my request to people who would be willing to help. None of the information, of course, will be used in any way that identifies individuals. What I hope is that it may help to clarify some of the problems that disabled people face and some solutions of these.

Ann Shearer,
26 Lambolle Place,
London, NW3.

Ethnic groups

WE are trying to compile a list of surveys and research related in any way to the health care needs and difficulties of ethnic minority groups in Britain.

We feel that a lot of very useful work related to ethnic minorities is being done at present all over the country but that many of the results are never publicised.

We would be very grateful if anyone who is doing any kind of survey or small research and would like to share their results could send us their name, a contact address and a short simple outline of the project, the group(s) it deals with, and its aims. We should like to receive this information by January 31, 1980.

Colette Taylor,
Project Officer,
King's Fund Centre,
126 Albert Street,
London NW1 7NF.

...drop a line?

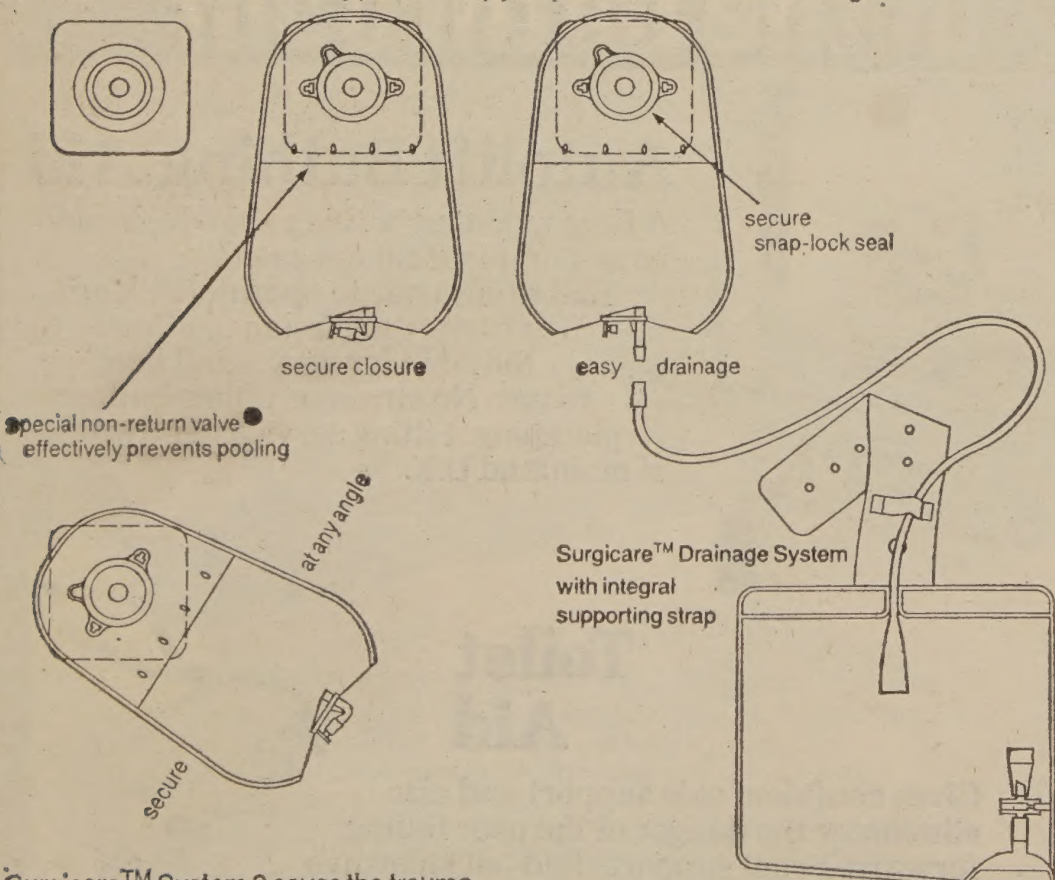
ROBERT Dean, aged 35, is looking for a penfriend, preferably female. His interests are reading, writing, classical music, walking and crossword puzzles. Please write to him at Merlyn House, West End Road, Bitterne, Southampton, Hants.

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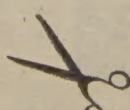
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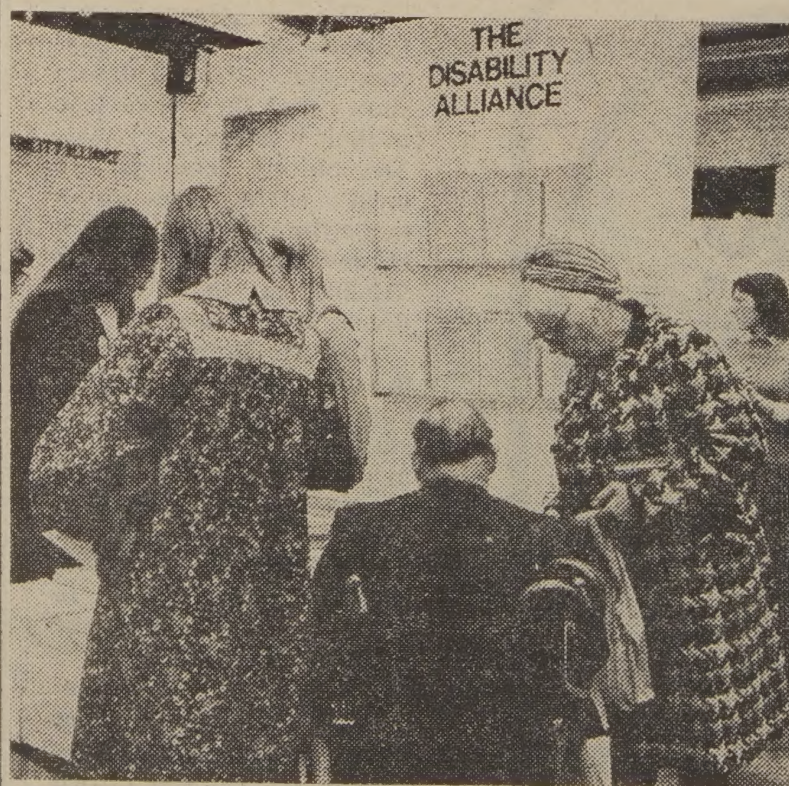
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SN Dec



ONE of the busiest stands at the 'Voluntary Organisations into the Eighties' exhibition was that of the Disability Alliance, where Irene Loach (far left) was kept fully occupied with a stream of interested inquirers.

People and places in the news



Founder's daughter marries

MISS Susan Hodgson, daughter of the late Mr Eric Hodgson, one of the four founder members of The Spastics Society, and Mrs Nellie Hodgson, has married Mr Stanley Barnes, and the couple are pictured left.

Both Mr and Mrs Barnes are residents of the Beechwood Cheshire Home in Huddersfield, and will continue to make their home there. Mrs Barnes is a member of the Huddersfield and District Spastics Society.

Picture by the Huddersfield Examiner



A fair cop for funds from sponsored sailor

AN Exeter policeman who sailed a trimaran in the Azores race last June has handed over a cheque for £2,050, his sponsorship money, to Vranth House School and Day Centre for Spastics.

The 2,500-mile yacht race to the Azores and back in which he came fifth, will qualify Sgt Peter Phillips to take part in the 1980 Royal Western/Observer Single-handed Transatlantic Race.

Sgt Phillips' trimaran 'Kingsbury' flew a pennant specially designed by the children of Vranth House, who charted his progress throughout the race. He was sponsored by hundreds of local people.



FIFE Playcrafts factory manager is Elizabeth Burton, who insists that the cuddly toys made by the special school leavers are up to a rigorous commercial standard.

The toy makers of Fife

FIFE Playcraft is a Scottish scheme producing toys and play equipment all of which has been tried and tested in local special schools in Fife. The workers themselves are all special school leavers, 16-17-year-olds who are physically or mentally handicapped, signing on to learn basic job skills such as sewing or woodwork.

The project began in 1976 as a small workshop supplying toy libraries in Fife, but has now moved into a brand new £100,000 factory in Dunfermline where the running costs are being met by the Manpower Services Commission. Now Fife Playcraft aims to distribute its catalogue all over the country.

Picture by The Scotsman



Gifts for playtime

CHILDREN from Trengweath Spastics Centre, Plymouth, were pleased to show off their new sandpit, together with a set of dominoes and other toys and games made specially for them by the woodwork pupils of Widey Secondary

Thank you, Jack



CARDIFF and District Spastics Association wanted to convey a special thank you to one of their members, Mr Jack Evans, who has been with them for over 28 years. Their Chairman Mrs D. Cottle is seen above handing over the gift of a portable television set.

'None of Jack's children are disabled but he has worked for the Cardiff and

District Association unstintingly for over a quarter of a century,' says Emlyn Davies, senior regional officer for The Spastics Society.

Now she doesn't need the Sharks

THE Shropshire Sharks, the new name for the Shropshire Spastics Swimming Club, have had to give one of their young members the order of the flipper because she is no longer disabled.

Eight-year-old Joanne Jackson, who used to wear calipers and use a wheelchair because of a congenital hip condition, was recommended by a paediatrician to join this well-known club for handicapped swimmers. Two survival medals and one national trophy later, Joanne now walks and skips along to school like other eight year olds.

'I would like to think our club had something to do with it,' says Ted Cowen, organiser of the Shropshire Sharks, who recently hosted the county's first 'Mini Olympics' at Shrewsbury Baths.

Picture by Western Morning News

Young idea gives 'lift off' for disabled riders

FIVE pre-University students at British Aerospace Dynamics Group, Bristol, have designed and built a lightweight portable device which enables the handicapped to readily mount and dismount from horse-back.

The rider is fitted in a simple harness and winched into position. The pulley block traverses the top beam of the rigid aluminium alloy structure enabling the rider to be accurately positioned over the horse before being lowered into position.

The winch is operated by one person and can mount riders who weigh up to 16 stone, a system for children could use lighter materials.

Easily erected in 5-10 minutes it can be carried on a car's roof rack.

Each year the training department at Bristol sponsor pre-University students to give them a foretaste of life in industry, and the opportunity to manage a complete project. After some basic engineering training in workshops and drawing office the students were set the project which had to be completed in 14 weeks, and kept within the £150 budget, excluding company resources and material.

Picture shows: left to right, Dixit Patel, Swindon; David Huther, Abingdon; David Hornsby, Worthing; Ian Farr, Plymouth; and Mark Gillett, Maryport. The pony Gypsy belongs to Emma, left, and Fiona Ransom, who live at Thornbury.

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'Love from Penny' after a lifetime of silence



● A DREAM comes true for Penny and her mother, brother and sister as a little box enables her to crack a joke. 'One of the wonderful things about it,' said her father, 'is that we've discovered her great sense of humour.'

Picture by the Daily Mirror.

PENNY Kitchen, a 16-year-old from Halifax whose family emigrated to Canada, has found her voice. But it isn't the accent of her native Yorkshire or the typical drawl of North America. When Penny speaks she sounds more like a Dalek straight out of Dr Who — and she's delighted. For Penny is a severely handicapped spastic, confined to a wheelchair, and for years the only way she could communicate was by tapping out a message laboriously on an electronic typewriter by means of a wand attached to her forehead. She still has to use the wand but now it connects with a 'magic box.' The box contains a tiny computerised voice device, with a storehouse of sounds, words and phrases represented by combinations of numbers.

And the first words she spoke in its strange staccato sounds were quite simply: 'Mum, Dad, I love you both so much. I've been wanting to say that for such a long time.'

similarly surprised when they asked her to talk about the hospital.

Penny spoke for literally millions of similarly handicapped people when she told them: 'I do not like it when doctors talk about me in the third person when I am sitting there. They talk about me as if I am stupid.'

Have a chat with Penny these days and she will tell you: 'It was awful wanting to say things and not being able to. I felt very left out. I used to think if only I could talk people would get to know the real me. They would not think I was as stupid as I look. It is fantastic being able to talk. It has opened up a new world for me.'

'I love joining in discussions and chipping in on conversations. I do not want sympathy. I just want people to accept me as normal. I hope to go to University. I do not know what I want to do for a living. I know I will be restricted in my choice. Maybe I will do something to help people like me.'

LIZ COOK.

The battery operated device is small enough to be portable so that no matter where she is, Penny can always get a word in edgeways — for instance, when she is in the company of strangers who ignore her. 'Talk to me,' she tells them, 'I'm not as stupid as I look!'

One day her mother was cooking Sunday lunch and as she took the traditional part of the meal out of the oven, the Yorkshire pudding, Penny said 'Mm—lunch smells good, Mum.' But the word store is not confined to just soft words and kind phrases. Her 13-year-old brother, Peter, got the 'rough side of her tongue' one day when she suddenly said: 'For goodness sake, Peter, blow your nose. You are driving me crazy with your sniffing.' And the doctors at the hospital in Canada which she attends regularly were

'Shadow' Minister

Continued from Page 1

they can become hospitalised—at far greater cost to public funds.'

Mr Morris said that he had received a parliamentary reply on November 12 from Sir George Young, an Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Health and Social Security, giving him the average daily cost of maintaining patients in hospital. The reply showed that for the year ending March 31, 1978, the average daily costs were: £38.05p a day for acute cases in hospital; £15.32p a day for geriatric cases in hospital.

'That is approaching £14,000 a year to keep a person who is an acute case in hospital and £5,500 a year to keep an elderly person in hospital. It doesn't cost anything like that amount to enable a disabled person to live in his or her home.'

'Most of my work as Minister for the Disabled and now as "Shadow" Minister has been concerned with trying to enable people to stay as part of the community.'

End of a long climb for Julie's mother

SOON there'll be no more bedtime stairs to climb for Julie's mum, Mrs Catherine Stockton, of Stretford, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, who sent a cheque for £3,000 to pay for the building of a ground floor bedroom.

Julie's parents, Mr and Mrs Stockton, were turned down for a grant by Trafford Council, a decision which led Mr Nigel Smith, Senior Regional Officer for The Spastics Society to say, 'Trafford is leading the stakes for the meanest council in the land.'

The Stocktons then tried to raise a second mortgage without much success. Their plight was publicised in the Manchester Evening News (which took the picture) and a local solicitor promised a cheque for £3,000.



'We are absolutely overwhelmed by this act of kindness,' commented Julie's father, maintenance engineer Alan Stockton. 'I can contact the builder so that the job can be started right away. All the plans have been passed. It was

just a question of the money.'

Hopefully the work will be completed by Christmas. Julie's parents are delighted, and Julie's only worry is, 'Will Father Christmas be able to find my new room?'

Disabled are 'hurt' at Ipswich

THE new prestige Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich, officially opened by Princess Alexandra recently, can only accommodate one wheelchair-bound theatre-goer at any one time. This sole space is the only provision made for the disabled at the new theatre, built with money raised from rates, taxes and public donations.

The theatre does however meet the statutory obligations of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act because of a ramped entrance.

Handicapped people have easy access to the ground floor and as long as they can transfer to a normal seat, there will be no problem, says theatre chairman Mr David Heckels.

One of the most vocal protesters is a voluntary helper with the local Spastics Society, Mr Harold Millen, who wanted to know, 'What about those

who can't get out to sit in a seat?'

'They could have left recesses for half a dozen places at least. Everyone confined to a wheelchair will feel very hurt to think they are trying to keep us out of the theatre.'

Director speaks at Dublin ICPS Seminar



THE VIP line-up at the International Cerebral Palsy Society's meeting in Dublin.

Pictured left are Mrs Anita Loring, secretary of ICPS; Senator The Hon Lady Goulding; Dr P. J. Hillery, President of the Irish Republic; Mr James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society; and Dr C. Barry, Director of the Central Remedial Clinic, Dublin. There was a showing of the 'Feeling Special' film, and papers were given by Mr Loring, Professor Paul Polani and Dr Adinolfi of the Paediatric Research Unit at Guy's Hospital.

SPASTICS NEWS

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